

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 480 272

CS 512 406

AUTHOR Hanzl, Anne
TITLE The PETA Guide to the Children's Book Council Awards Shortlist, 2003.
INSTITUTION Primary English Teaching Association, Marrickville (Australia).
PUB DATE 2003-00-00
NOTE 13p.; For the 2002 version, see ED 468 245.
AVAILABLE FROM Primary English Teaching Association, P.O. Box 3106, Marrickville NSW 2204, Australia. Tel: (02) 9565 1277; Fax: (02) 9565 1070; e-mail: info@peta.edu.au; Web site: <http://www.peta.edu.au>.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Childrens Literature; Early Childhood Education; Elementary Education; *Fiction; *Foreign Countries; *Picture Books; Reader Response; *Reading Material Selection; *Recreational Reading
IDENTIFIERS Australia; Book Design; *Information Books; Trade Books

ABSTRACT

The Children's Book Council of Australia Awards contain several categories for the best books published for children in 2002. This PETA guide looks at all categories, with the exception of Older Readers. The purpose of the guide is to suggest ways of exploring each shortlisted book, focusing on its significant aspects. It points out that children should be encouraged to consider every aspect of the books, beginning with their front covers, and continuing with relevance and originality of theme, style of writing, degree of engagement, and development of setting, plot, and character. The Early Childhood category cites six books, providing questions to answer before reading, during reading, after reading, and about artistic/design analysis. The Picture Book of the Year category also cites six books and provides questions. The Book of the Year: Younger Readers lists six books and also provides questions. Finally, the Eve Pownall Award for Information Books category lists six books and provides questions. (NKA)

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The PETA Guide to the

Children's Book Council Awards Shortlist 2003

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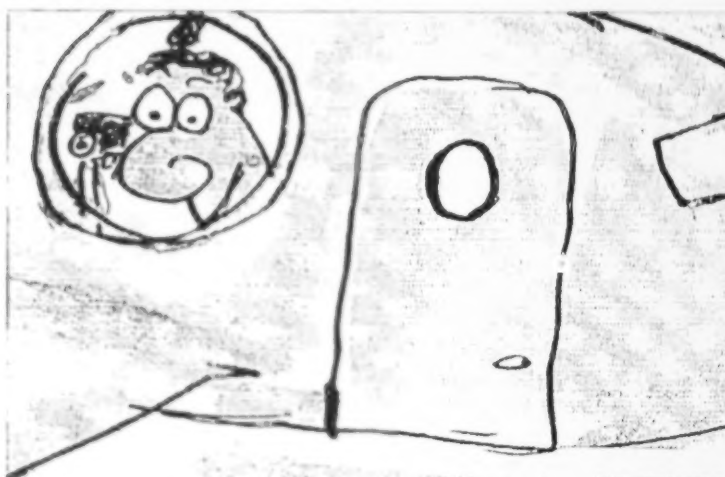
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by ANNE HANZL

The shortlist for the annual Children's Book Council of Australia Awards presents a wonderful opportunity to explore the books which, in the opinion of the CBCA judges, were the best children's books published in 2002. There are several award categories, ranging from books for young children through to books for young adults.

This PETA guide looks at all categories with the exception of Older Readers. The purpose of the guide is to suggest ways of exploring each shortlisted book, focusing on its significant aspects.

In supporting students' responses, consider such elements as originality of theme and approach, style of writing, degree of engagement with the reader, and development of plot, setting and character. All of these aspects should be considered in relation to the age group for which the book seems intended (a point of discussion in itself). Unity of illustration, text and overall design in the telling of the story is an important consideration in relation to picture books. The style of illustration and media used should be appropriate to the theme of the book. Information



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planes.

From *Old Tom's Holiday*,
Leigh Hobbs. See p. 6.

books should present facts and ideas effectively in terms of text, illustration and design, with well researched subject matter.

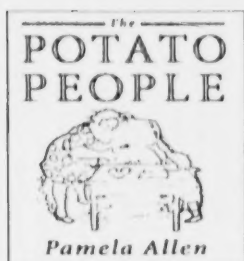
The awards are announced in Children's Book Week, 16-22 August 2003. The theme for this year's Children's Book Week is 'Oceans of

Stories'. More information about the awards can be obtained from the CBCA website, <www.cbc.org.au>. The detailed CBCA judges' report is published in the August edition of *Reading Time*, while the CBCA award acceptance speeches are published in the November edition.

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Book of the Year: Early Childhood



The Potato People

PAMELA ALLEN (text/illustration)

PENGUIN BOOKS AUSTRALIA / ISBN 0 670896 60 8

An article about this book can be found in *Magpies* 17 (1), March 2002:4-5.

Before reading

- Who or what do you think 'potato people' might be?
- What do you think the woman and the boy on the front cover are doing?

During reading

- When Jack is away for several weeks, why does Grandma think she is just like the potato people?
- What does 'wrinkled and withered' mean?
- Do old potatoes really grow stalks/horns? What are they for?

After reading

- How do Grandma and Jack feel about each other?
- Why does Grandma decide to bury the old potato people in the compost heap?
- How do we know that Grandma is surprised at the result?
- Why does Grandma wait until the stalks are dead before she starts digging up the heap?

Artistic/Design analysis

- What does Grandma's blue floral dress remind you of? (Look at page 1.)
- How does the artist show us how to make potato people?
- How does the artist show us what is happening under the ground in the compost heap?
- Why do you think some illustrations are filled with detail and others have no background?



Guess the Baby

SIMON FRENCH (text) / DONNA RAWLINS (illustration)

ABC BOOKS / ISBN 0 733306 14 4

Before reading

- Read the title and look at the cover. What do you think this book is going to be about?
- Whose picture do you think the children are holding up?

After reading

- What did baby Jake teach the children about babies?
- Why did Mr Judd suggest that the children bring their own baby photos to school?
- Could you match each baby photo to each child before the artist gave us clues?
- How did Mr Judd help the children to guess the baby in the last photo?
- What have the children been reminded of by the end of the book?
- Can you work out who is telling this story?

Artistic/Design analysis

- How many children are in the class? How does the artist make each child distinctive?
- How does the artist help the reader to know which baby photo belongs to which child?
- What kinds of things can we see the babies doing in the photos?
- Why do you think the artist uses so much white space and so few background illustrations?
- Why do you think the artist paints a moustache on the pictures of Mr Judd as a baby? Why do the illustrations of Mr Judd as a baby have a different kind of background?
- Can you find any real photos in the book?

Too Loud Lily

SOPHIE LAGUNA (text) / KERRY ARGENT (illustration)

OMNIBUS BOOKS / ISBN 1 862914 55 4

Before reading

- Who do you think is pictured on the front cover?
- In what ways can somebody be too loud (e.g. noise, behaviour, dress, colour)?
- How is the 'loud' theme continued on the endpapers, and on the half-title and title pages?

After reading

- What kind of person is Lily? Can she help being loud? Does she try not to be so loud?
- What effect does her behaviour have on her family and friends?
- What kind of person is Miss Loopiola? Why do you think she seems to favour Lily? What do you think Miss Loopiola might have been like when she was young?
- Why do you think Lily is so nervous on the night of the play?
- What do you think Lily will be like when she grows up?

Artistic/Design analysis

- Why do you think the artist portrays Lily and Miss Loopiola as hippos?
- How does the artist emphasise Lily's loudness and exuberance?
- Why do you think the artist gives Miss Loopiola a bright red cloak?
- When do we see Lily quiet for the first time?



A Year on Our Farm

PENNY MATTHEWS (text) / ANDREW MCLEAN (illustration)

OMNIBUS BOOKS / ISBN 1 862914 41 9

This title is also shortlisted for the Picture Book of the Year Award.

Before reading

- What kind of farm can you see on the front cover?
- How/Why does the tree drawn around the main picture on the front cover change?
- Who can you see riding on the tractor on the title page (and in the small illustration opposite)? How do you think he treats his dogs?

During reading

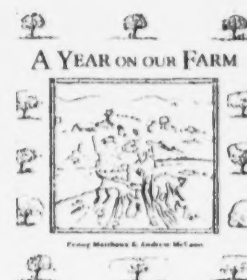
- Look closely at the illustrations on the first two double-page spreads. What information are we given about the farm? How many people live on the farm?
- Why do you think the book begins with summer/January? How do you think it will end?

After reading

- How do the seasons affect farm life and work?
- Compare the number living on the farm at the end of the year with those at the beginning. What is happening? Why is there only one sheep 'living' on the farm?
- Through whose eyes are we seeing the farm?
- What are the good things about living on the farm? Are there any bad (or not so good) things about farm life?
- How do the children help with work on the farm? Do they all have to help out? What do they learn while they are helping out?

Artistic/Design analysis

- How does the artist organise the illustrations to show us the whole year on the farm?
- What media do you think the artist uses? How are colour, shade and shadow used to show time of day, weather, season?





Bear and Chook

LISA SHANAHAN (text) / EMMA QUAY (illustration)
HODDER HEADLINE AUSTRALIA / ISBN 0 733615 76 7

Before reading

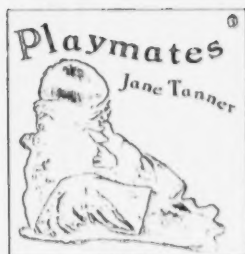
- Look at the front cover. What kind of characters do you think Bear and Chook are?
- What kind of life do you think they lead?
- What do you think they are doing on the title page?

After reading

- How would you describe Bear (e.g. adventurous, imaginative, foolhardy)?
- How would you describe Chook (e.g. cautious, protective, playful)?
- Why do you think Bear and Chook are such good friends?
- What is the pattern of Bear and Chook's day? How do we know when something is going to go wrong?
- What does Chook use to describe how close the danger came each time?
- How would you describe Bear's feelings when Bear can't find Chook?

Artistic/Design analysis

- Why do you think the artist often uses fuzzy edges for the characters and background?
- Why is the text sometimes in a very large and distorted print? What effect does this have?
- How does the artist portray Bear and Chook's mood at the end?



Playmates

JANE TANNER (text/illustration)
PENGUIN BOOKS AUSTRALIA / ISBN 0 140541 47 0

Before reading

- Look at the front cover. Who do you think are playmates?
- How do you think the boy feels about his teddy?

During reading

- Can you guess what is going to happen to Ben and his teddy?
- What do you think might be in the big box that arrives for Ben?

After reading

- How does teddy feel while Ben is playing with the new puppy?
- Do you think Ben means to neglect teddy?
- When does Ben start to look after teddy again? Why/When does Rosie stop pulling on teddy's ear?
- What does Ben do to make sure that they all become friends together?

Artistic/Design analysis

- How does the artist make sure that our eyes focus on Ben, teddy and Rosie (e.g. use of strong colours for the figures; some toys against a white background)?
- When/Why are some words in the text in red instead of black?

Picture Book of the Year

Some of these picture books may be for mature readers. The titles are arranged alphabetically by illustrator.

The Potato People

PAMELA ALLEN (text/illustration)
PENGUIN BOOKS AUSTRALIA / ISBN 0 670896 60 8

This title is also shortlisted for the Book of the Year: Early Childhood Award. See the entry under that category.

Jethro Byrde, Fairy Child

BOB GRAHAM (text/illustration)

WALKER BOOKS / ISBN 0 744588 63 4

Before reading

- Which of the figures on the front cover do you think is Jethro Byrde?
- Read the biblical text on the half-title page. What do you think it means?
- Study the title-page illustration. In which part of this city do you think our story will happen?

After reading

- In what kind of place do Annabelle and her family live?
- Why do you think Annabelle can see and talk to the fairies? How does she earn their trust?
- Why do her parents seem unable to see the fairies?
- What kind of people are the fairies? How do they help Annabelle to understand why the adults can't see them?
- Why/How does the fairy watch become so important to Annabelle? When does time stand still for Annabelle and the fairies? Do you think that 'fairy time' was operating then?
- Reread the biblical text at the beginning of the book. Do you find it easier to understand how this saying relates to Annabelle's interaction with the fairies?

Artistic/Design analysis

- Return to the illustration on the title page. Can you find where Annabelle and her family live? Can you see Annabelle?
- Why do you think the artist gives such a detailed picture of the place where Annabelle lives?
- How does the artist emphasise the difference in size between Annabelle and the fairies?
- When/Why does the artist use double-page spreads and at other times small illustrations?



In Flanders Fields

BRIAN HARRISON-LEVER (illustration) / NORMAN JORGENSEN (text)

FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE PRESS / ISBN 1 863683 69 0

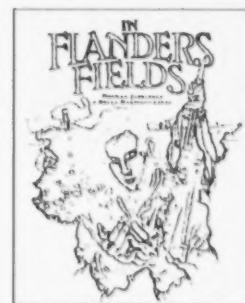
A curriculum study guide for this book can be found on the publisher's website <www.facp.iinet.net.au>.

Before reading

- When/Where do you think this story may be set? Why do you think the soldier is looking at the robin so carefully?
- Do you know what the term 'In Flanders Fields' refers to?
- Study the endpapers. What do you think the soldiers are looking at/for?

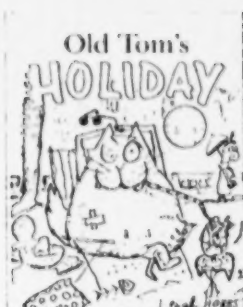
After reading

- Why do you think the guns stop firing on Christmas morning? Are the soldiers able to celebrate Christmas in any way?
- How do you think the soldier was able to see the robin? What does the term 'no-man's land' mean? Why does the soldier think the enemy will not shoot him? Why does no one shoot him?
- How would you describe the soldier's actions in going to free the little bird? Why do you think the author has not given the soldier a name?
- What do you think the sniper whispers to himself as the soldier lets the bird fly free?
- How was it that both sides were singing the same Christmas carol? Do you think something like this could really happen in wartime?
- Why do you think neither group of soldiers is named? In what ways were the soldiers similar?
- Why do you think the story is told in the present tense?
- Why do you think the author has included a verse of the poem *In Flanders Fields*? Try to find the whole poem and read it.



Artistic/Design analysis

- Why do you think the artist has used mainly pen and ink sketches with light brown wash throughout the book? (If possible, compare with early twentieth-century sepia photos.)
- What kind of atmosphere does the colouring of the illustrations create?
- Where/Why does the artist use the colour red?
- Compare the endpapers. What is similar/different?
- From the illustrations, what do we learn about the way the soldiers lived and fought? Was/Is war really like this?



Old Tom's Holiday

LEIGH HOBBS (illustration/text)

ABC BOOKS / ISBN 0 733310 73 7

Before reading

- In what kind of place is Old Tom on the front cover?
- Does he look as though he's enjoying himself? What about the woman in the background?

After reading

- What kind of cat is Old Tom? What kind of person is Angela Throgmorton?
- How do they feel about each other?
- Why doesn't Angela take Old Tom on her holiday? How does he feel about being left behind?
- How does Old Tom manage to become part of the holiday? How does Angela feel about that?

Artistic/Design analysis

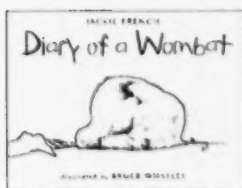
- What do the illustrations tell us that the text doesn't?
- The story is told in a simple and straightforward way. How does this compare with the mood and style of the illustrations?
- Why do we often see only a little bit of Old Tom in much of the story?

A Year on Our Farm

ANDREW McLEAN (illustration) / PENNY MATTHEWS (text)

OMNIBUS BOOKS / ISBN 1 862914 41 9

This title is also shortlisted for the Book of the Year: Early Childhood Award. See the entry under that category.



Diary of a Wombat

BRUCE WHATLEY (illustration) / JACKIE FRENCH (text)

HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS / ISBN 0 207199 95 7

Visit the publisher's website <www.harpercollins.com.au/jackiefrench/> to learn more about Mothball the wombat.

Before reading

- What is a diary? Who do you think is going to write this wombat's diary?
- Look at the front and back covers. What has the wombat been doing? Why do you think he is asleep?

After reading

- Why is the text written in short, often abrupt sentences?
- How does the wombat relate to the humans in his life? Who is in charge of his life and surroundings? Who is 'training' whom in this situation?
- What kinds of things does the wombat like to do and eat?
- Find the text that is not from the wombat's 'diary'. Who is calling out and what tone of voice do you think is being used?
- Would you like to have a wombat as a pet?

Artistic/Design analysis

- Look at the first two double-page spreads. How does the illustrator show the passing of time?
- What do the illustrations tell us that the text doesn't (e.g. how the dustbath affects the humans; what the 'hairy creature' is)?
- Why does the hole in the door become 'curiously resistant' to the wombat's paws?
- What do the illustrations show us about the wombat's character?
How many words can you think of to describe this wombat?

Book of the Year: Younger Readers

Rain May and Captain Daniel

CATHERINE BATESON

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND PRESS / ISBN 0 702233 37 4

An article about the author and this book can be found in *Magpies* 12 (3), July 2002:10–11.**Before reading**

- What mood does the design on the front and back covers create?
- What do you think the title means?

After reading

- Why do you think the author has Rain May telling her own story?
How does this help us to get to know Rain well?
- What kind of things does Rain have to accept about her new home, her school, and her new relationship with her father and mother?
- Why does Daniel find it difficult to relate to other children at school?
Why are Rain and Daniel able to become such good friends?
- When/Why is Rain tempted to forget Daniel and start "drifting to the girls' side"?
- How does Rain show her true friendship to Daniel and the others at school?
- How do we gain some insight into the way Daniel thinks?
Why do you think he uses 'Trekkie' terms to describe some people/situations?
- How/Why do Rain and her mother use poetry fridge magnets to communicate?
How can poetry sometimes express our thoughts better than other forms of language?
- What is the significance of the poem on Daniel's fridge at the end?



Horrendo's Curse

ANNA FIENBERG (text) / KIM GAMBLE (illustration)

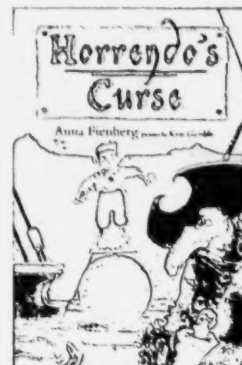
ALLEN & UNWIN / ISBN 1 865086 03 7

Before reading

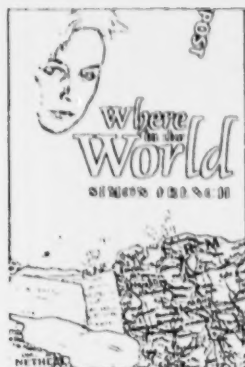
- Which of the characters on the front/back covers do you think is Horrendo?
- What seems to be happening to the boy?
- What do you think 'Horrendo's Curse' may be?

After reading

- Why is the 'Charming Spell' such a curse to Horrendo? Is it made worse because of where he lives?
- What kind of person is Horrendo? Why is everyone so shocked when he loses his temper towards the end of the story? What effect does it have?
- Why does everyone have unpleasant names in his village?
Why does the school teach such strange subjects?



- How does the author soften the effect of the nasty way the children and the pirates talk to one another? What would happen if you talked to each other in this way?
- How does Horrendo eventually manage to change the ways of many of the pirates?
- What do you think Horrendo, the children, and the pirates all learn from their adventures?
- How effective are the illustrations in helping to create scenes and characters for the story?



Where in the World

SIMON FRENCH

LITTLE HARE BOOKS / ISBN 1 877003 03 4

An article about this book can be found in *Magpies* 17 (2), May 2002:4-6.

Before reading

- What clues do the covers give the reader about this story?
- In which parts of the world do you think the story will be set?
- How would you describe the expression on the boy's face?

After reading

- Why do the chapters alternate in setting and time so frequently?
What cues are given to readers to let them know when/where a particular chapter is set?
- What difficulties does Ari have to contend with in his life?
- Why is music such an important part of his life? Are many people as talented musically as Ari?
- How do Ari's musical memories and experiences help him to cope with his new life and the death of Opa?
- How/Why does Opa play such an important part in Ari's life?
- Why does Ari keep writing emails to Opa after Opa's death?
Why does Ari initially not want anything from Opa's musical studio?
- How can we tell that Ari is maturing and learning to cope with Opa's death by the end?
- What do you think the future holds for Ari?



Tom Jones Saves the World

STEVEN HERRICK

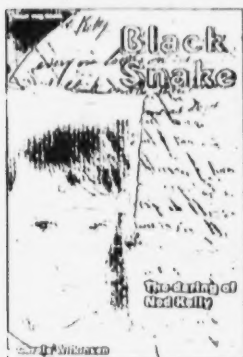
UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND PRESS / ISBN 0 702233 36 6

Before reading

- What mood does the cover design create? What kind of person do you think Tom Jones is likely to be?
- Have you read any of Steven Herrick's novels before? If so, what is unusual about them?

After reading

- What is different about the form of this novel compared with most other novels?
- Consider the effect this form of writing has on you. Does it slow your reading down — make you think more about the language used, the feelings portrayed?
- Why is Tom so frustrated with his parents and their new home? How/Why does it seem more like a prison than a safe place to live? Does he really wish his parents were dead?
- Why do Tom and Cleo get on so well together? Why do you think Tom and his grandfather become such good friends? How/Why does Tom work to reunite his father and grandfather?
- How would you describe Tom's father? Why has he started talking in such a pompous and stilted way? How does Tom teach his father a lesson?
- What do you think the future holds for Tom and his family?
- How does the author incorporate humour into his story/story-telling?



Black Snake: The Daring of Ned Kelly

CAROLE WILKINSON

BLACK DOG BOOKS / 1 876372 15 X

A curriculum study guide for this book, compiled by the author, can be found on the publisher's website <www.bdb.com.au>.

Before reading

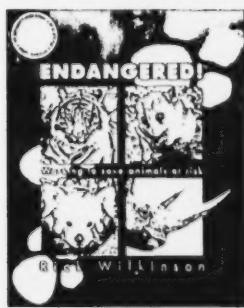
- Who was Ned Kelly?
- What do you think the cover image represents? What can we see in the background?

After reading

- What kind of book is this: fiction, non-fiction, a mixture of both?
Why do you think the story/facts are presented mostly in chronological order?
- Why has the author included 'What if you were there ...' sections? Why is it useful to see events from various points of view? Were the people quoted for, or against, Ned Kelly?
- What kind of person would you say Ned Kelly was? Why/When did he first get into trouble with the police? Why/How did he continue to break the law? Do you think he was trying to help his family, or to improve things for poor people generally?
- What means did he use to try to get his message across to the authorities, and to others?
- Why did the police have so much trouble catching Ned Kelly and his gang? How would you describe the actions of the police, both individually and as a group? What makes you say this?
- Why do you think Ned Kelly is often seen as a kind of folk hero rather than a criminal?
- Were there any long-term effects on the community from the way Ned Kelly was treated, and the way the police behaved?
- What research did the author do for this book? Are any of her sources available to you?

Artistic/Design analysis

- What kinds of visual material are included? What do the photographs give to the story-telling?
- What special letter of Ned Kelly's is a background to the 'What if you were there ...' segments?
- How has the author included extra pieces of information throughout the main text?



Endangered! Working to Save Animals at Risk

RICK WILKINSON

ALLEN & UNWIN / ISBN 1 865086 64 9

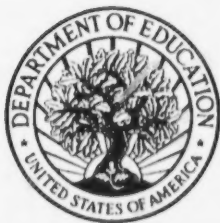
A curriculum study guide for this book is available from the publisher's website <www.allenandunwin.com>.

Before reading

- What does the word 'endangered' mean?
- Can you name the animals shown on the front cover and the title page?
Can you think of any other endangered animals?
- Read the introductory section ('Who cares?'). What is the author hoping to achieve?
What does the term 'safe havens' mean?
- In what state of Australia was most of the research done for this book?
- How many species have been documented as being extinct over the past 400 years?
Why is maintaining genetic diversity important in captive breeding programs?

After reading

- Does the author do all the talking in this book? Why / Why not?
- Why do the zoo-keepers have to be careful not to interfere with animals' natural parenting behaviour or intrude into animal territories?
- Why is it impossible for some animals to return to the wild after being bred in captivity?
- Which of the animals did you find particularly interesting? Has this book made you more aware of endangered animals?
- Why do you think photography is the main form of illustration throughout the book?



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